

# Bjarke Alexander Larsen

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Game researcher, developer, and writer investigating how games tell stories with players.

See what I do at <http://www.bjarke.it/aboutme/>

## Working Experience

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- 2020-Now Teaching Assistant (Part time) – *University of California, Santa Cruz*  
Part of PhD employment.  
Taught classes in game design (CMPM80K), UX (CMPM131), and interactive storytelling (CMPM148).
- 2018-2020 Research Assistant (Part time) - *Aalborg University*  
Part of the “[VIZARTS](#)” project on exploring new forms of storytelling.
- Gave talks and ran workshops on interactive storytelling.
- 2017-2019 Programmer, Unity Developer (Part time) - *Pointvoucher*  
Startup mobile game development of branded casual games for Android and iOS.
- Developed gameplay and UI for 6 mobile games in collaboration with a multinational development, backend, and design team.
  - Maintained all live games with regular updates and fixes in as needed from the support team and technical requirements.
- 2016 Assistant (Internship) - *Oubliette Entertainments Ltd.*
- Helped construct puzzles for [FRAMED](#), a live-streamed Escape Room for Alibi, UKTV.
  - Helped on [RETHINKERS](#), an ARG for recruitment for Dyson. Created a Twine-based puzzle.
  - Helped create an Escape-room-in-a-box experience, from concept to prototype.

## Projects

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- 2021-Now Researcher - *Destiny Narrative Project*  
PhD Research project into the relationship between live development and storytelling in Destiny 2.
- Deployed and analyzed a survey, inspired by research in collective memory.
  - Performed digital ethnography on Destiny players and how they interact with the narrative.
  - Conducted qualitative interviews and analyzed data with a Grounded Theory approach.
- 2021-2023 Narrative Designer – [LUX](#)  
Research project on using ARGs to study complex psychological and social structures such as resilience in everyday situations.
- Wrote the narrative of the ARG and collaboratively designed puzzles for research needs.
  - Conducted countless playtests on multiple iterations of the game, interacting with and observing player behavior as a character within the game.
  - Analyzed, coded, and presented complex findings on player’s behavior.
- 2019 Technical Director - [Flux](#)
- Implemented prototypes for an interactive documentary museum exhibit, about our relationship to gender and how it changes.
- 2017 Programmer – [Voice of God](#)  
Silly, voice-controlled game made for Global Game Jam at ITU Copenhagen, 2017 in a team of 7.  
Won awards for Best Game, Most Hilarious Game, and Most Out of the Box Game.
- 2015-2016 Narrative Designer, Programmer – [THINQ](#)  
Multi-semester game & research project in collaboration with 6-8 other students.
- Designed the narrative and levels to meet a variety of external and internal requirements.
  - Designed, conducted, and analyzed several playtests and studies with mixed-methods data, including telemetry, observation, and post-play interviews.
- 2015 Creator - [Eravola](#)  
Interactive fiction game. Awarded a “Runner-up” position in the WAG (Write-a-game)-challenge.
- Solo project. Written, designed and programmed by myself.

## Education

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- 2020-Now PhD in Computational Media - *UC Santa Cruz, CA*
- 2015-2017 MSc in Medialogy (Games Specialisation) - *Aalborg University, Copenhagen*
- 2012-2015 BSc in Medialogy - *Aalborg University, Copenhagen*

## Publications

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*“Anything a Guardian Does Is Canonical’: Player Understanding of Canon in Destiny” CHI PLAY 2023 (Accepted for Publication)*

Presents results from a survey of how Destiny players understand the canon of the lore of Destiny.

*“Myth, Diegesis and Storytelling in Perennial Games” ICIDS 2022.*

Looks at ongoing live games (perennial games) as a kind of mythology, lived by the community, which helps us understand many aspects of storytelling in these games.

*“Wrestling With Destiny: Storytelling in Perennial Games” ICIDS 2021.*

Analyses and presents a framework for how ongoing live games like Destiny tell stories, by comparing them to sports and professional wrestling.

*“Making the Player the Detective” FDG 2020.*

Compares detective games with detective fiction, finding how most games are not whodunits but thrillers.

*“The Story We Cannot See: On How a Retelling Relates to Its Afterstory” ICIDS 2019.*

An investigation of emergent narrative and retellings and defining “afterstory” as a missing link between a player’s experience and a later retelling.

*“Well, That Was Quick’ – Towards Storyworld Adaptivity that Reacts to Players as People” ICIDS 2019 (Won Best Short Paper).*

A preliminary exploration of when the world adapts to players in ways that do not affect the plot.

*“The Narrative Quality of Games and Play” Master’s Thesis.*

An in-depth investigation of how mechanics and interaction conveys narrative in a game. Includes an analysis of the narrative properties of Chess.

*“The Moody Mask Model”. ICIDS 2015.*

A social simulation based on Goffman’s mask theory. Evaluated with playtests and a common narrative user experience questionnaire.

## Skills

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### Research

- Qualitative methods, user interviews, ethnography.
- Experimental study design, surveys, A/B testing, usability testing.
- Investigative analysis methods.
- Reporting and presenting results and complex information.
- Great experience with game studies, narratology, ludology and interactive storytelling research.

### Design and Development

- Excellent communication skills.
- Playtest design, prototyping and iterative design methods.
- Unity3D, C#, Python.
- Game design methods and theories.
- Time management, deadline driven production, and agile development practices.
- Git, Sourcetree, Jira, Slack.
- Problem solving and debugging.

### Narrative and other

- Creative writing, prose, poetry.
- Narrative, narrative theory, structure, and pacing.
- Branching, interactive narratives.
- Twine, ink.
- Giving and receiving in-depth, precise feedback.
- English and Danish.
- Electronic music production
- Boulderling

*Pronunciation of Bjarke: [Bj] like Björk, [arr] like a sad pirate, [ke] like kernel.*